



May 21st, 2014 – PTO General Body Meeting Minutes

Meeting Commenced: 8:45 pm

Board Members Present: Cathy Gallinger – Treasurer, Disha Mahadevia – Treasurer, Mrs. Debbie Dawson – Teacher Representative, Mrs. Crumlish – Teacher Representative, Damian Sugrue – Principal, Andrea Keenan – Vice President, Christina Pharo – Vice President, Ranjini Reddy – President.

Chairpersons Present / Parents Present: Ann Marie Testarmata, Michelle Brown-Droese, Charlene Anestis, Jing Zhang, Smitha Bharadwaj, Rashmi Muralidhar, Mamatha Kotham, Sheetal Kulkarni, Namita Dhyani

Welcome and Approval of March 2014 Minutes

Ranjini Reddy welcomed the group.

The minutes of the March meeting were presented for review and approved.

First motion to approve minutes – Charlene Anestis

Second motion to approve minutes – Rashmi Muralidhar

Treasurer Update

An update of the PTO Profit and Loss Budget versus actual sheet was presented by Cathy Gallinger. The income for the year to date was \$40,824.83. The money from Willow Books (approximately \$500) and the Music CD fundraiser was still expected. Of note, the brand new fundraiser, the Variety Show, brought in \$3629.06. The expenses were at \$36,958.08. The overall estimated costs for the year were met. Next year, the major expense will still be for the teaching assistants. The major fundraisers will be the Craft Fair and the Direct Appeal.

Budget for 2014-15 school Year

The budget for the next academic school year was discussed. The PTO will not have the expense associated with the copy machine for the next academic year as the school obtained a new copier. Part of the money from this budget line item will go to buy paper to cover the cost for PTO printing supplies at the school (approximately \$200) for the next academic year. Potentially the remaining money from the copy machine line item can be used to reimburse a naturalist for training volunteers for the nature walk program in the future (there are 18 training sessions across 21 classes for each academic year). A number of different options were also discussed on how to deal with the training issue including video taping of training sessions, volunteers from the Garden Club and high school students. A second change in the budget for next year was to earmark some money for parent talks. A one –time monthly fee to the Foundation Center grants database (\$179), which was approved in an earlier meeting, will also be seen as a line in the budget for next year.

A vote was taken on the budget for the 2014-15 academic year and passed unanimously.

Kindergarten to First Transition Forum

Andrea Keenan gave an update for the kindergarten to first transition forum. The event is for incoming first grade parents and this is the second year that the PTO will be hosting the event. During the event, general information on school policies, forms, and other information is presented. In the first year, Dr. Kotyk had taken the initiative and led the event. Next year, Mr. Sugrue and the new vice-principal will be the presenters. The date is set for September 9th. E-vites have been sent out to the current kindergarten parents.

End of Year Picnic/ Movie

Ranjini Reddy spoke about having an end of year picnic with an outdoor movie showing. Discussions followed on the feasibility of doing this. It was decided, given the time of year and other logistics, a movie will be played in the cafeteria and families will be invited to bring a picnic dinner to be enjoyed on Conant grounds. June 13th was selected as the date of the event.

Principal's Update

Mr. Sugrue gave a report on the happenings at school. The new media is set up and ready to be used. The playground is also being looked as a potential area for development, contingent on approval of funds. Eileen Sullivan, the science coordinator, has received a grant that will allow an architect to visit Conant grounds. The landscape architect will be looking at the K-3 playground to see how it can be transferred into a natural "playscape" and learning space. Changes to the upper playgrounds are also being looked at using Conant funds. With respect to when these changes will occur, Mr. Sugrue stressed the need to focus on securing money first in order to move forward. He would like to use \$50,000 from the enrichment money to go towards playground improvement. Currently, it is just a matter of waiting for the AB district business office to move to the next step.

With respect to staffing, there will be a one year first grade position for which interviews are ongoing. A new assistant principal was also hired. Mrs. Abigail Dressler will be coming back to Conant as the new assistant principal.

Open Items

a. Approval for additional expenses for this academic year

A vote was called for approving funds to purchase a gift for the outgoing Nature Walk chair, Deb Malloy, who oversaw the program for the past 7 years. The cost of the gift (a sculpture) was \$200. This budget line was approved unanimously. A second vote was for retirement gifts for Mrs. Kennedy and Ms. Burbank (\$100 per teacher). This budget item also passed unanimously.

b. Next year – procedures for Newsflash articles

Padmini Narayan will be taking over as editor of the PTO newsflash for next year. There will a slight change in the process for article submission. This is with respect to a hard deadline for article submission. The Thursday before the Sunday publication date of the Newsflash will now be the deadline date for article submission. A new email id will be established for the editor (newsflash@conantpto.org).

c. Levels of Giving for the Direct Appeal for the next academic year (PayPal account)

The PTO has submitted an application for a new PayPal account which is awaiting approval from the IRS to confirm the PTO's non-profit status. Once approved, this will give us their non-profit rates with PayPal.

d. Open positions for the next academic year

A few open positions are still available for next year. The big one is to find a vice-president and parent volunteer to shadow Beth Ali, our current Craft Fair chair person. The other open roles were a gift coordinator for the Ice Cream Social, a chair for the Gardening committee, and a PTO secretary.

e. Central emailing database

Next year, the central office IT department will be sharing the email database from the Poweschool system with the PTO. This database will contain email contact information from families who have given permission to share this data with the PTO.

f. Meetings

Dates for the upcoming school committee meeting and the PTO chair meeting were presented. Andrea Keenan gave the update on a new program that the PTO hopes to set in motion next year. This is the teacher / staff appreciation snack that will be set up once a month. The program will also ask teachers if they need specific help in their classrooms such as cleaning, set up, etc.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:45 am

First Motion to Approve: Heidi Friedman

Second Motion to Approve: Jeanne Hobbie

Minutes Typed by: Ranjini Reddy